

of the countess, and for whom Jones built a great portion of Wilton.

The house is admirably situated on the brow of an eminence, commanding extensive views over the wide spread vale of Bedford; it had noble avenues of trees leading down the hill into the valley, and also carried across the estate in various directions, forming a picturesque and interesting park, though on a small scale; the want of water, however, is felt in the landscape.

The house, though dismantled and in ruins, presents many fine features, great depth of shadow, bold projections, and costly decorations; it is built of brick, with stone facings; the architraves, mullions, and dressings generally, being richly and deeply cut in a rather soft, but close-grained freestone, called Tinternhoe. Some parts of it approximate to the style of Palladio. The centre of the north front is similar to the interior of the Convent della Carita, at Venice, which was built by Palladio after the plan of a palace in ancient Rome. The centre of this front is sufficiently perfect to give a good idea of its pristine beauty. A noble recessed portion, 29.5 x 12.3 forms the centre of the ground story, having four Doric three-quarter columns, with arches between, and two in the return angles, standing on a base, from the middle of which a flight of steps descended, to probably a terrace or garden lawn. Three arches support the entablature and gallery of the Ionic Loggia, similarly arched, which is again surmounted by a story, having two Corinthian or composite pilasters between three recessed niches, the centre one pierced as a window, and each ornamented with a sculptured shell in the archings, and above which there is a small pediment supported by scrolls; a coat of arms, with supporters, filled the panel under the pediments. The two principal apartments on this side the house had noble bay windows extending to the first-floor, the chamber story above which, it may be presumed, was terminated by an ogee moulding, according to a print, taken from elevations, late in the possession of Lord Holland.

The west, or garden front, is also of an ornamental character—the centre forming a recessed portico of Doric architecture, with open loggia above in Ionic; above which, it is supposed to have terminated, in a story of Corinthian or composite, with a pediment. The metopes, between the Doric triglyphs, have the armorial bearings of the Sidney and Pembroke families, sculptured in reliefs alternately with monograms.

The south front, or principal entrance, was plainer than the two sides above described, but nevertheless formed an imposing approach to the mansion. It consisted of a centre tower, beneath which was the porch; on either side, deeply recessed, were the large mullioned and double transom windows of the Great Hall, divided, as I presume, into two portions, beyond which were two noble projections on either side, forming a library of 36 feet, and a dining hall of about 40 feet in length; the whole building flanked at the angles by four towers, and measuring 123 by about 24 feet. The porch tower appears to be rather a peculiar feature.

Houghton House, while in the possession of the Duke of Bedford, was repaired, and the interior fitted up by Sir W. Chambers for the Marquis of Tavistock (grandfather of the present duke), who was killed in hunting at this seat, to which he was extremely partial. Lord Osborn afterwards resided at it for a short time. And in 1794, it was dismantled and rendered a ruin.

It is to be regretted that a structure, built for centuries, should have been purposely dilapidated and ruined, the situation of which was remarkably fine, the park well timbered and convenient, and the materials of the house of so firm and strong a character, that even now, after an exposure of half a century to the weather, the brickwork and stone in the interior are so hard and polished, as to resist considerable efforts to penetrate the walls. Some small remnants of painted stucco are discernible, but mutilated by that spirit of vulgar mischief, whose delight seems to be in obliterating the remains of ancient times, and fastening a reproach (but too well founded) on our national character.

Having thrown together these few disjointed and hasty notes and observations, I must

deprecate censure by pleading my incompetence to treat upon a subject which, strictly speaking, belongs to a professional man, but as your society have been kind enough to compliment me by affixing to my name the honorary title of corresponding delineator for this county, I cannot do less than tender to them my acknowledgments, by sending the result of a few agreeable hours, passed during this most enjoyable summer, in the groves and ruins of Houghton Conquest.

#### NEWLEAF DISCOURSES ON ARCHITECTURE.

THE STATUE ON THE ARCH—PRECEDENT—REASON.

SIR,—By your kindness I have a character to lose. In your last number (unwittingly, I will admit,—but none the less therefore forcibly), that character is assailed. For I am held up as affording, but another lamentable instance of the deep-rooted and universal "stunkism" of man.

*Et tu Budownike!* the same whom I remember with gratitude as coming so boldly forward—the first to give me "a hearty bravo-simo!" and at a time when bravismos seemed likely to be few! To be pilloried, and by him, as "cowardly" and "stunky,"—"hanged" as a vile "recrunt,"—and finally "dismissed" to silence and the grave "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," as altogether an "ugly subject!" and at the very moment too, when poor human nature was haunting me with the dread word *publication of heresy*, and whispering maliciously that there exists a thing by name *discretion!*

But it may be that the error lies with myself. Perhaps I ought to have apologized to you and your readers for having withdrawn from the pages of *THE BUILDER*, to deliver myself into the hands of the book-printer. By your favour I was permitted to undertake a public service; and I certainly cannot complain when I find myself reminded that that service has never been completed. When I commenced my letters, nothing could have been farther from my thought than the publication of "The Newleaf Discourses;" my intentions were limited by the simple idea of a few hasty sketches to do a little quiet good. I have been guilty of no fraud; for if it had been possible, I should have very much preferred to advance the good truth by the medium of your journal, so much more widely circulated than my little volume can ever be expected to be. But the subject warned with me, widened, deepened. I had known myself for long as a heretic; but it was soon apparent that the full volume of my heresy was undisclosed even to myself. My honesty prompted me, too, to say very much that I feared *THE BUILDER* never would endorse. And last, not least, I could throw the letters of a year into the reading of a day. And so it happened that "The Young Architects of England, by one of themselves," changed form and purpose. For which, if I have sinned against you, I pray forgiveness.

Now that I have put pen to paper, with your leave I will add "one more voice to the outcry already so justly raised against the erection of the statue of the Duke of Wellington over the arch at Hyde-park-corner." On the afternoon of the memorable Tuesday, I was aroused from a little reverie by the well-known knock and ring of dear Dr. Verditius. Another moment and it was, "O my friend, Mr. Newleaf, I pray thee to accompany me straightway unto the street Piccadilly; for the image of the Duke Wellington and his horse—is it not all strung up into the air with a string? We shall obtain an excellent view thereof." So to Piccadilly we went.

Arrived, the Doctor soon perceived the form of his porter, "Master Hugh," surveying the suspended sculpture with a keen eye. "O Master Hugh," quoth my friend, "tell us now what is thine opinion of this image: for I know thee for a man of unsophisticated imagination." "Well ruled, Doctor," returned he (Hugh is a shrewd old Northerner)—"Well ruled, Doctor, I jist did not like to say"; but ruled that horse—ruled it did not

please my notions ara'. Na! the Lord preserve's! saw efer ye or mortal boddy sic a dast like beast? Noo, I'll jist speak rael honest, an' tell ye my rael opiogoo. It jist disoot mind me of nothig ither than a stirky, at the shore o' Ebberdeen wheo they're pettin' him aboard ship wi' a cran'. For ye must ekow that they pet a kind o' belt conder the belly o' the beast, an' hyste him up wi' a cran', an' swing him aboard; considerio' this to be maist easy for the men an' comfortablest for the craters themselfs. An' so, in coorse, when the puir nouty's i' the air he looks feel enough, as ye may verra weel suppose, an' his leggies hang dingle-dangle jist like that for a the world, and his een ab' luggies gang skeery-skeery like that jist kinetly, as if althegither not eknowin' whether to tak' it to earnest or in fun. Weel, I weed forgie me, Doctor, an' a' boddy, but gif the horse wad jist cry *Coomo-o oon*, the thing wad be raly perfat an' complete."

"Thou knowest," said the doctor to me afterwards, "that I am one who loveth not in any hard sayings. Neither is Master Hugh, my man, one who rejoiceth in acedulated discourse. But what couldst thou object, dear friend of mine, were I to propose for this image support from above? Would it not be appropriate? for I agree with Master Hugh. Novel likewise? a thing much to be desired in these our days. Even so; and likely, as well as any other mode, to please all parties, my friend,—even the Knight Frederick Trench himself, whose ingenious argumentation it is, that the Duke Wellington being a most unprecedented man, it is well that we place his effigy in a most unprecedented position."

But Mr. Newleaf is a cautious person in sculpture; so he changed the subject.

If it were not exceeding my licence I might expatiate upon the wonderful ingenuity of the "Artist" who accomplished, for the small sum of thirty thousand pounds, the extraordinary conception of a large Duke astraddle on a large horse; and, secondly, I might expose my reasons for perfect concurrence with the Dr.'s opinion, that "the Duke his horse undoubtedly appeareth to have been a wonderfully unlovely beast;" but what I have at present to say refers more particularly to the idea—*The statue on the Arch*.

The placing of the sculpture with the profile to the front I shall take no notice of. It is not only a matter much more difficult in argument, but it is also a point at present of much less importance, than the general fact of putting that statue, in any way whatever, on that "bad eminence."

Your humble servant and Sir Frederick Trench are quite and cordially at one in an utter contempt for precedent. I will frankly confess this,—I was really prepared to defend (if possible) the statue on the arch? Come, thought I, here's an opportunity, now, for fastening quite a quarrel on Mr. Precedent. If possible, of course. But it wouldn't do. I own that I must in this case—not defend Precedent, mark you—but perfectly agree with it. The thing is monstrously bad.

The letter of "C. R. C." in *The Times* is a very able criticism of the question. I have nothing to add to it. But I have a good deal to abstract from it, if you will,—to lop off the evil and rotten branches, that the good and sound may be the better and the sounder,—to clear away the weak sophistry, that the strong truth may be the more strongly appear.

For the *precedent* on which Professor Cockrell so hugely dwells, has nothing whatever to do with the matter. The question is, *This statue on this Arch*,—on its own merits. Ancient Romans have no authority in the case any more than ancient Kamschatkans. We may take notice of their practice as *advice*,—we may give it due weight as the result of their study, due value as suggestive of principles to the mind; but to *adhere to it* on account of *precedent* is to wear pigtail and powder because our fathers did so.

"To a question of this nature," says the Professor, "we naturally turn to classical examples." Not at all, we do nothing of the kind. We naturally turn to "the true end and aim of Art"—the principles of Nature and Reason, on which if the classical examples be not themselves dependent, said classical examples with all their classicity are absurd and bad. A pretty pass have we come to indeed when in a question of this nature we—

\* To the book which the letters in question and others in addition, now form,—*The Newleaf Discourses on the Fine Art Architecture*,—we shall refer hereafter. We may, in passing, express surprise that the fact of their previous appearance in our pages does not appear to be mentioned in it.